of stage, television, radio, or motion picture productions. Some teach drama in colleges and universities.

The length of a performer's working life depends largely on training, skill, versatility, and perseverance. Although some actors, directors, and producers continue working throughout their lives, many leave the occupation after a short time because they cannot find enough work to make a living. In fact, many who stay with the occupation must take a second job to support themselves.

Job Outlook

Employment of actors, directors, and producers is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2008. In addition, an even greater number of job openings is expected to arise from the need to replace workers who leave the field. Nevertheless, competition for these jobs will be stiff, as the glamour of actor, director, and producer jobs, coupled with the lack of formal entry requirements, will attract many people to these occupations. As in the past, only the most talented will find regular employment.

Rising foreign demand for American productions, combined with a growing domestic market, should stimulate demand for actors and other production personnel. An increasing population, a greater desire to attend live performances, and the growth of cable and satellite television, television syndication, home movie rentals, and music videos will fuel this demand. In addition to the increasing demand for these media, attendance at stage productions is expected to grow, and touring productions of Broadway plays and other large shows are providing new opportunities for actors and directors. However, employment may be affected by government funding for the arts—a decline in funding could dampen future employment growth.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of actors, directors, and producers were $27,400 in 1998. Minimum salaries, hours of work, and other conditions of employment are covered in collective bargaining agreements between producers of shows and unions representing workers in this field. The Actors' Equity Association represents stage actors; Screen Actors Guild covers actors in motion pictures, including television, commercials, and films; and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) represents television and radio performers. Most stage directors belong to the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, and film and television directors belong to the Directors Guild of America. While these unions generally determine minimum salaries, any actor or director may negotiate for a salary higher than the minimum.

On July 1, 1998, the members of Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA approved a new joint contract covering all unionized employment. Under the contract, motion picture and television actors with speaking parts earned a minimum daily rate of $576, or $2,000 for a 5-day week, in 1998. Actors also receive contributions to their health and pension plans and additional compensation for reruns and foreign telecasts.

According to Actors Equity Association, the minimum weekly salary for actors in Broadway stage productions was $1,135 per week in 1998. Those in small "off-Broadway" theaters received minimums ranging from $450 to $600 a week, depending on the seating capacity of the theater. Smaller regional theaters pay $400-$600 per week. For shows on the road, actors receive about an additional $100 per day for living expenses. However, less than 15 percent of dues-paying members work during any given week. In 1998, less than half worked on a stage production. Average earnings for those able to find employment was less than $10,000 in 1998.

Some well-known actors have salary rates well above the minimums, and the salaries of the few top stars are many times the figures cited, creating the false impression that all actors are highly paid. In reality, earnings for most actors are low because employment is so erratic. Screen Actors Guild reports that the average income its members earn from acting is less than $5,000 a year. Therefore, most actors must supplement their incomes by holding jobs in other fields.

Many actors who work more than a set number of weeks per year are covered by a union health, welfare, and pension fund, including hospitalization insurance, to which employers contribute. Under some employment conditions, Actors' Equity and AFTRA members have paid vacations and sick leave.

Earnings of stage directors vary greatly. According to the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, summer theaters offer compensation, including "royalties" (based on the number of performances), usually ranging from $2,500 to $8,000 for a 3- to 4-week run of a production. Directing a production at a dinner theater will usually pay less than a summer theater but has more potential for royalties. Regional theaters may hire directors for longer periods of time, increasing compensation accordingly. The highest paid directors work on Broadway productions, commonly earning $100,000 plus royalties per show.

Producers seldom get a set fee; instead, they get a percentage of a show's earnings or ticket sales.

Related Occupations

People who work in occupations requiring acting skills include dancers, choreographers, disc jockeys, drama teachers or coaches, and radio and television announcers. Others working in occupations related to acting are playwrights, scriptwriters, stage managers, costume designers, makeup artists, hair stylists, lighting designers, and set designers. Workers in occupations involved with the business aspects of theater productions include managing directors, company managers, booking managers, publicists, and agents for actors, directors, and playwrights.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about opportunities in regional theaters may be obtained from:

☛ Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 355 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

A directory of theatrical programs may be purchased from:

☛ National Association of Schools of Theater, 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 21, Reston, VA 22090.

For general information on actors, directors, and producers, contact:

☛ Screen Actors Guild, 5757 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036-3600.

☛ Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, 304 Hudson St., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10013.

☛ American Federation of Television and Radio Artists—Screen Actors Guild, 4340 East-West Hwy., Suite 204, Bethesda, MD 20814-4411.

Dancers and Choreographers

(O*NET 34053A and 34053B)

Significant Points

- Although most dancers stop performing by their late thirties, some remain in the field as choreographers, dance teachers, or artistic directors.
- Most dancers begin their formal training between the ages of 5 to 15 and have their professional auditions by age 17 or 18.
- Dancers and choreographers face intense competition for jobs; only the most talented find regular employment.

Nature of the Work

From ancient times to the present, dancers have expressed ideas, stories, rhythm, and sound with their bodies. They do this by using

Most dancers have rigorous practice schedules.

a variety of dance forms, including classical ballet and modern dance styles that allow free movement and self-expression. Many dancers combine stage work with teaching or choreography.

Dancers perform in a variety of settings, such as musical productions, and in folk, ethnic, tap, jazz, and other popular kinds of dancing. They also perform in opera, musical comedy, television, movies, music videos, and commercials, in which they may sing and act as well. Dancers most often perform as part of a group, although a few top artists perform solo.

Many dancers take their cues from choreographers, who create original dances and develop new interpretations of traditional dances. Because few dance routines are written down, choreographers instruct performers at rehearsals to achieve the desired effect. In addition, choreographers are also involved in auditioning performers.

Working Conditions

Dancing is strenuous. Due to the physical demands, most dancers stop performing by their late thirties, but they may continue to work in the field as choreographers, dance teachers and coaches, or artistic directors. Some celebrated dancers, however, continue performing beyond the age of 50.

Daily rehearsals require very long hours and for shows on the road, weekend travel often is required. Most performances are in the evening, while rehearsals and practice usually are scheduled during the day. As a result, dancers must often work late hours. The work environment ranges from modern, temperature-controlled facilities to older, uncomfortable surroundings.

Employment

Professional dancers and choreographers held an average of about 29,000 jobs at any one time in 1998. Many others were between engagements so that the total number of people employed as dancers over the course of the year was greater. Dancers and choreographers work in a variety of settings, including eating and drinking establishments, theatrical and television productions, dance studios and schools, dance companies and bands, concert halls, and amusement parks. Dancers who give lessons worked in secondary schools, colleges and universities, and private studios.

New York City is home to many major dance companies. Other cities with full-time professional dance companies include Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dallas, Houston, Miami, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Training characteristics depends upon the type of dance. Early ballet training for women usually begins at 5 to 8 years of age and is often given by private teachers and independent ballet schools. Serious training traditionally begins between the ages of 10 and 12. Men often begin their training between the ages of 10 and 15. Students who demonstrate potential in the early teens receive more intensive and advanced professional training at regional ballet schools or schools conducted under the auspices of major ballet companies. Leading dance school companies often have summer training programs from which they select candidates for admission to their regular full-time training program. Early and intensive training also is important for modern dancers, but modern dance usually does not require as many years of training as ballet.

Most dancers have their professional auditions by age 17 or 18. Training beyond this age is an important component of the careers of professional dancers, who normally have 1 to 1 1/2 hours of lessons every day and spend many additional hours practicing and rehearsing.

Because of the strenuous and time-consuming training required, a dancer's formal academic instruction may be minimal. However, a broad, general education including music, literature, history, and the visual arts is helpful in the interpretation of dramatic episodes, ideas, and feelings. Dancers sometimes conduct research to learn more about the part they are playing.

Many colleges and universities confer bachelor's or higher degrees in dance, usually through the departments of music, theater, or fine arts. Most programs concentrate on modern dance, but many also offer courses in ballet and classical techniques, dance composition, dance history, dance criticism, and movement analysis.

A college education is not essential to obtain employment as a professional dancer. In fact, ballet dancers who postpone their first audition until graduation may have a disadvantage when competing with younger dancers. However, a college degree can help dancers who retire at an early age to enter another field of work.

Completion of a college program in dance and education is essential to qualify for employment as a college, elementary school, or high school dance teacher. Colleges, as well as conservatories, usually require graduate degrees, but performance experience often may be substituted. A college background is not necessary, however, for teaching dance or choreography in local recreational programs. Studio schools usually require teachers to have experience as performers.

Because of the rigorous practice schedules of most dancers, self-discipline, patience, perseverance, and a devotion to dance are essential to succeed in the field. Good health and physical stamina also are necessary attributes. Above all, dancers must have flexibility, agility, coordination, grace, a sense of rhythm, a feeling for music, and a creative ability to express oneself through movement.

Dancers seldom perform unaccompanied, so they must be able to function as part of a team. They should also be highly motivated and prepared to face the anxiety of intermittent employment and rejections when auditioning for work. For dancers, advancement takes the form of a growing reputation, more frequent work, bigger and better roles, and higher pay.

Choreographers typically are older dancers with years of experience in the theater. Through their performance as dancers, they develop reputations as skilled artists. Their reputation often leads to opportunities to choreograph productions.

Job Outlook

Dancers and choreographers face intense competition for jobs. The number of applicants will continue to exceed the number of job openings, and only the most talented will find regular employment.

Employment of dancers and choreographers is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2008, reflecting the public's continued interest in this form of artistic expression. However, cuts in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and related organizations could adversely affect employment in this field. In addition to job openings that will arise

each year due to increased demand, openings will occur as dancers and choreographers retire or leave the occupation for other reasons.

National dance companies should continue to provide most jobs in this field. Opera companies and dance groups affiliated with colleges and universities and television and motion pictures will also offer some opportunities. Moreover, the growing popularity of dance in recent years has resulted in increased employment opportunities in teaching dance. Additionally, music video channels will provide some opportunities for both dancers and choreographers.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of dancers and choreographers were $21,430 in 1998. Those working with producers, orchestras, or entertainers earned $25,000 in 1997. Dancers on tour received an additional allowance for room and board and extra compensation for overtime. Earnings from dancing are usually low because dancers' employment is irregular. They often must supplement their income by teaching dance or taking temporary jobs unrelated to the field.

Earnings of many professional dancers are governed by union contracts. Dancers in the major opera ballet, classical ballet, and modern dance corps belong to the American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc., AFL-CIO; those on live or videotaped television belong to the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists; those who perform in films and on TV belong to the Screen Actors Guild; and those in musical comedies are members of the Actors' Equity Association. The unions and producers sign basic agreements specifying minimum salary rates, hours of work, benefits, and other conditions of employment. However, the contract each dancer signs with the producer of the show may be more favorable than the basic agreement.

Dancers covered by union contracts are entitled to some paid sick leave, paid vacations, and various health and pension benefits, including extended sick pay and family leave provisions provided by their unions. Employers contribute toward these benefits. Dancers not covered by union contracts usually do not enjoy such benefits.

Related Occupations

Other workers who convey ideas through physical motion include ice skaters, dance critics, dance instructors, and dance therapists. Athletes in most sports also need the same strength, flexibility, agility, and body control as dancers.

Sources of Additional Information

Directories of dance study and degree programs may be purchased from:

☛ National Association of Schools of Dance, 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 21, Reston, VA 20190.

☛ The National Dance Association, 1900 Association Dr., Reston, VA 20191.

Musicians, Singers, and Related Workers

(O*NET 34047A, 34047B, 34047C, 34047E, and 34051)

Significant Points

- Part-time schedules and intermittent unemployment are common, and many musicians supplement their income with earnings from other sources.
- Aspiring musicians begin studying an instrument or training their voices at an early age; a bachelor's or higher degree in music or music education is required to teach at all educational levels.
- Competition for jobs is keen because the glamour and potentially high earnings attract many talented individuals; those who can play several instruments and types of music should enjoy the best job prospects.

Nature of the Work

Musicians, singers, and related workers play musical instruments, sing, compose, arrange, or conduct groups in instrumental or vocal performances. They may perform alone or as part of a group, before live audiences or in recording studios, television, radio, or movie productions. Although most of these entertainers play for live audiences, some prepare music exclusively for studios or computers. Regardless of the setting, musicians, singers, and related workers spend considerable time practicing, alone and with their band, orchestra, or other musical group.

Musicians often specialize in a particular kind of music or performance. Instrumental musicians, for example, play a musical instrument in an orchestra, band, rock group, or jazz group. Some play a variety of string, brass, woodwind, or percussion instruments or electronic synthesizers. Those who learn several related instruments, such as the flute and clarinet, have better employment opportunities.

Singers interpret music using their knowledge of voice production, melody, and harmony. They sing character parts or perform in their own individual style. Singers are often classified according to their voice range—soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, or bass—or by the type of music they sing, such as opera, rock, reggae, folk, rap, or country and western.

Composers create original music such as symphonies, operas, sonatas, or popular songs. They transcribe ideas into musical notation using harmony, rhythm, melody, and tonal structure. Although most songwriters still practice their craft on instruments or with pen and paper, many songwriters now compose and edit music using computers.

Arrangers transcribe and adapt musical composition to a particular style for orchestras, bands, choral groups, or individuals. Components of music—including tempo, volume, and the mix of instruments needed—are arranged to express the composer's message. While some arrangers write directly into a musical composition, others use computer software to make changes.

Conductors lead instrumental music groups, such as orchestras, dance bands, and various popular ensembles. These leaders audition and select musicians, choose the music most appropriate for the talents and abilities of the musicians, and direct rehearsals and performances.

Musicians often specialize in a particular kind of music or performance.